

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method for detecting and resolving conflicts in association with a data allocation, comprising:
 - determining the relationship between each of a plurality of positions in a hierarchical organization of data;
 - 5 selecting a position i ;
 - determining a total weight of position i ;
 - 10 if a total weight of position i is effectively non-zero, removing the influence of position i from the other positions and adding position i to a set of conflict-free positions;
 - 15 alternatively, if the total weight of position i is effectively zero:
 - selecting a position k with which position i has a relationship;
 - reintroducing the effect of position k on the other positions if k is already in the conflict-free set;
 - removing position k from the conflict-free set if k is already in the conflict-free set; and
 - 20 if i is not the selected position, removing the influence of position i from the other positions and adding position i to the conflict-free set; and
 - successively repeating the method for each position, with each successive position becoming position i .
2. The method of Claim 1, wherein:
 - the positions comprises parents in the hierarchical organization of data and positions i and j comprise parents i and j ; and
 - 25 determining the relationship between a plurality of positions comprises determining a parent-parent relationship matrix identifying the relationships between a plurality of parents.
3. The method of Claim 2, wherein the parent-parent relationship matrix is determined using a parent-child relationship matrix identifying the relationships between each parent and one or more children of each parent.

4. The method of Claim 3, wherein the parent-parent relationship matrix comprises the matrix $\mathbf{R}\Sigma\mathbf{R}^T$, where Σ comprises a matrix of the variations of the children, \mathbf{R} comprises the parent-child relationship matrix, and \mathbf{R}^T is the transpose of \mathbf{R} .

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5. The method of Claim 3, wherein the parent-parent relationship matrix comprises the matrix $\mathbf{R}\mathbf{R}^T$, where \mathbf{R} comprises the parent-child relationship matrix and \mathbf{R}^T is the transpose of \mathbf{R} .

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6. The method of Claim 2, wherein determining the total weight of position i comprises identifying the diagonal value in the parent-parent relationship matrix corresponding to parent i .

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7. The method of Claim 6, wherein removing the influence of position i comprises performing a *SWEET* operation on the diagonal value in the parent-parent matrix corresponding to parent i .

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8. The method of Claim 6, wherein reintroducing the effect of position k on the other positions comprises performing an *INVSWEET* operation on the diagonal value in the parent-parent matrix corresponding to parent k .

9. The method of Claim 1, wherein selecting position k comprises:
requesting a selection by a user of position k ; and
receiving input from the user identifying the selected position k .

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10. The method of Claim 9, wherein a selection by a user of position k is requested only if position i is included in a pre-defined set of positions for which user input is requested.

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11. The method of Claim 1, wherein selecting position k comprises selecting a position having a shared weight with position i that is effectively non-zero.

12. The method of Claim 1, wherein:
the hierarchical organization of data comprises one or more dimensions; and
the positions are all members of the same dimension within the hierarchical
organization of data.

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13. The method of Claim 1, wherein:
the hierarchical organization of data comprises multiple dimensions; and
the positions are associated with multiple dimensions of the hierarchical
organization of data.

14. A system for detecting and resolving conflicts in association with a data allocation, the system comprising one or more software components collectively operable to:

determine the relationship between each of a plurality of positions in a 5 hierarchical organization of data;

select a position i ;

determine a total weight of position i ;

if the total weight of position i is effectively non-zero, remove the influence of 10 position i from the other positions and add position i to a set of conflict-free positions;

alternatively, if the total weight of position i is effectively zero:

select a position k with which position i has a relationship;

reintroduce the effect of position k on the other positions if k is already 15 in the conflict-free set;

remove position k from the conflict-free set if k is already in the conflict-free set; and

if i is not the selected position, remove the influence of position i from the other positions and add position i to the conflict-free set; and

successively repeat the above steps for each position, with each successive position becoming position i .

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15. The system of Claim 14, wherein:

the positions comprises parents in the hierarchical organization of data and 25 positions i and j comprise parents i and j ; and

determining the relationship between a plurality of positions comprises

determining a parent-parent relationship matrix identifying the relationships 30 between a plurality of parents.

16. The system of Claim 15, wherein the parent-parent relationship matrix is determined using a parent-child relationship matrix identifying the relationships 30 between each parent and one or more children of each parent.

17. The system of Claim 16, wherein the parent-parent relationship matrix comprises the matrix $\mathbf{R}\Sigma\mathbf{R}^T$, where Σ comprises a matrix of the variations of the children, \mathbf{R} comprises the parent-child relationship matrix, and \mathbf{R}^T is the transpose of \mathbf{R} .

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18. The system of Claim 16, wherein the parent-parent relationship matrix comprises the matrix $\mathbf{R}\mathbf{R}^T$, where \mathbf{R} comprises the parent-child relationship matrix and \mathbf{R}^T is the transpose of \mathbf{R} .

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19. The system of Claim 15, wherein determining the total weight of position i comprises identifying the diagonal value in the parent-parent relationship matrix corresponding to parent i .

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20. The system of Claim 19, wherein removing the influence of position i comprises performing a *SWEET* operation on the diagonal value in the parent-parent matrix corresponding to parent i .

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21. The system of Claim 19, wherein reintroducing the effect of position k on the other positions comprises performing an *INVSWEET* operation on the diagonal value in the parent-parent matrix corresponding to parent k .

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22. The system of Claim 14, wherein selecting position k comprises:
requesting a selection by a user of position k ; and
receiving input from the user identifying the selected position k .

23. The system of Claim 22, wherein a selection by a user of position k is requested only if position i is included in a pre-defined set of positions for which user input is requested.

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24. The system of Claim 14, wherein selecting position k comprises selecting a position having a shared weight with position i that is effectively non-zero.

25. The system of Claim 14, wherein:
the hierarchical organization of data comprises one or more dimensions; and
the positions are all members of the same dimension within the hierarchical
organization of data.

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26. The system of Claim 14, wherein:
the hierarchical organization of data comprises multiple dimensions; and
the positions are associated with multiple dimensions of the hierarchical
organization of data.

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27. A method for detecting and resolving conflicts in association with a data allocation, comprising:

determining a parent-parent relationship matrix identifying the relationships between a plurality of parents in a hierarchical organization of data, the parent-parent relationship matrix determined using a parent-child relationship matrix identifying the relationships between each parent and one or more children of each parent;

5 selecting a parent *i*;

determining a total weight of parent *i* by identifying the diagonal value in the parent-parent relationship matrix corresponding to parent *i*;

10 if the total weight of parent *i* is effectively non-zero, removing the influence of parent *i* from the other parents and adding parent *i* to a set of conflict-free parents;

alternatively, if the total weight of parent *i* is effectively zero:

selecting a parent *k* with which parent *i* has a relationship;

reintroducing the effect of parent *k* on the other parents if *k* is already 15 in the conflict-free set;

removing parent *k* from the conflict-free set if *k* is already in the conflict-free set; and

if *i* is not the selected position, removing the influence of parent *i* from the other parents and adding parent *i* to the conflict-free set; and

20 successively repeating the method for each parent, with each successive parent becoming parent *i*.

28. A system for detecting and resolving conflicts in association with a data allocation, the system comprising one or more software components collectively operable to:

- determining a parent-parent relationship matrix identifying the relationships between a plurality of parents in a hierarchical organization of data, the parent-parent relationship matrix determined using a parent-child relationship matrix identifying the relationships between each parent and one or more children of each parent;
- 5 selecting a parent i ;
- determining a total weight of parent i by identifying the diagonal value in the parent-parent relationship matrix corresponding to parent i ;
- 10 if the total weight of parent i is effectively non-zero, removing the influence of parent i from the other parents and adding parent i to a set of conflict-free parents;
- alternatively, if the total weight of parent i is effectively zero:
 - 15 selecting a parent k with which parent i has a relationship;
 - reintroducing the effect of parent k on the other parents if k is already in the conflict-free set;
 - removing parent k from the conflict-free set if k is already in the conflict-free set; and
 - 20 if i is not the selected position, removing the influence of parent i from the other parents and adding parent i to the conflict-free set; and
 - successively repeating the method for each parent, with each successive parent becoming parent i .